

Psychedelia lurks behind Dukes' shadow

By Geoff McMurtry
Staff Reporter

The Dukes of Stratosphear, "Psonic Psunspot," Geffen Records

The opening notes of this album sound suspiciously like the beginning of the Mamas and Papas' "California Dreamin'." It's only for a few seconds, and it's really not the same at all, but it's best to remain suspicious through the whole album because remnants of 1960s psychedelia lurk behind every shadow.

Record Review

Like XTC, the Dukes of Stratosphear have been one of the most inventive, original and critically acclaimed pop groups of the last 10 years, but they've always been plagued by an unwanted critical comparison to the Beatles. They've always insisted on being judged on their own merits, but the melodies were just too much for some critics, easily caught up in the pretty pop harmony at the surface of their most accessible efforts.

Finally, in 1985, they apparently had had enough. The boys sneaked into a studio, chased each other

Concerts include Houston, Rogers

Whitney Houston, the 23-year-old Grammy-winning vocalist, will perform in concert Nov. 3 at the Omaha Civic Auditorium Arena.

Houston's first self-titled LP sold more than 8 million copies in the United States and 14 million copies worldwide. It is the best-selling debut of all time by a solo performer.

Houston is the first woman ever to have an album debut at No. 1 on the Billboard charts with her second LP, "Whitney."

Hits like "I Want to Dance With Somebody," "The Greatest Love of All," "How Will I Know" and "Saving All My Love For You" have kept Houston on the airwaves and the charts.

The Omaha concert will be performed in the round. All seats are reserved and the ticket price is \$18.75. Tickets are available at the Civic Auditorium, Younkers and Pickles Records. Phone charges may be made at 342-7107. The concert begins at 8 p.m.

Kenny Rogers, with special guests Ronnie Milsap and T. Graham Brown, will perform at the Civic Auditorium Oct. 20 on his 10th-anniversary tour.

Rogers' latest LP, "They Don't Make Them Like They Used To" is his 43rd of a career that began in the late 1950s. Rogers was named Favorite Country Music Performer at the 13th Annual People's Choice Awards this year.

Reserved tickets for the show are \$16.75. The concert begins at 8 p.m.

Milan calls Midwest home

MILAN from Page 9 and apply it to teaching.

"UNL had everything I was looking for in the terms of how I wanted to use my knowledge in helping students."

Besides teaching, Milan said she is dedicating her first year in Nebraska to choreography. One of her first projects will be as co-artistic director of the newly formed Lincoln Contemporary Dance Theatre.

"It's a company of dancers with the idea of bringing dance to those areas of Nebraska that don't have many dance opportunities and to generally interest people into learning a little more about dance," Milan said.

Nebraska may not be as adventurous as her eight-month dance tour of South America or as glamorous as being a feature performer in a New York City production, but Milan is comfortable with her choice.

"I was raised in the Midwest. This is home to me. I'm happy here," she said.

through every psychedelic musing of their most Pepperesque fantasies, and emerged with the sparkling EP "25 O'Clock." They gave themselves names like Sir John Johns and The Red Curtain. The cover, liner notes and sound of everything on the album were so psychedelic that comparisons were reversed. They had out-Beatled the Beatles.

Apparently, they liked the idea. As if merely submitting a near-constant, always changing stream of XTC records weren't a diverse enough challenge, the Dukes of the Stratosphear have reappeared, this time to leave their psychedelic footprints on a full album.

Once again, the Dukes win in the best song title category, with nominees "Collidescope" and "You're a Good Man Albert Brown (Curse You Red Barrel)."

The sound is still deeply rooted among the flowers of Sgt. Pepper psychedelia, but this time the lads manage to run through the whole '60s garden before getting caught. Cute, charming little English schoolgirls

tell Peter, Paul, Mary and Grace Slick a version of "Alice In Wonderland" that may be more hallucinogenic than the original. Herb Alpert's muted trumpet lines rear their foam-rubber heads briefly, and the album closes with "Pale and Precious," a slow, soft ballad interrupted with choruses that cram every Beach Boys surf harmony into three or four lines.

As befitting anything touched by XT... I mean Dukes, the melodies swim all around you, jump up to barely nudge your outstretched hand and exhort everybody to jump in 'cause the water's fine. But once you do you hear lyrics like:

"Have you seen Jackie,
He's a strange,
strange, strange,
little girl."

Like any deep woodland pond, every song has something lurking beneath the calm, placid prettiness on the surface. If XTC is going to be lazy enough to make us wait eight months between albums, the Dukes of the Stratosphear will be a more than adequate fill-in.



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